

**City Council of the City of New Castle
Special Council Budget Workshop Meeting
Town Hall - 201 Delaware Street – New Castle
Tuesday – May 21, 2013 – 6 p.m.**

Called to order: 6:00 pm

Roll call:

Councilperson Megginson
Councilperson Cochran
Council President Barthel
Councilperson Petty
Councilperson Vannucci

Also present:

Mayor, Donald Reese
City Treasurer, Janet Carlin
Manager of HR/Finance, Marian Delaney
David Bird, Planning Commission Chair
John Lloyd, City Code Officer/Tree Commission

Review Budget Requests:

Planning Commission

Mr. Bird, Planning Commission Chair presented the budget requests for the Planning Commission. Mr. Bird presented copies of the Planning Commission Budget requests for the last 4 years.

Mr. Bird started by reviewing what the Planning Commission has accomplished for the year.

- Neighborhood Study is well under way; there have been meetings where residents have had the opportunity to give their input.
- Parking Study Sub-Committee has mapped existing parking facilities, and completed survey.
- Waterfront Study; Council has been apprised as to the efforts to obtain funding.
- Working with the City and the Alliance Coordinating the Wayfinding grant.
- Downtown Gateway Rezoning Ordinances.

Professional Development & Training \$500.00 pays for commissioners to receive American Planning Association newsletters with updates on what's happening around the country relating to planning – this amount also allows commissioners to attend Institute Public Administration Seminars in Dover.

General Expenses \$7,500.00; a portion of this amount is recouped by City through fees charged for certain reviews. This line item also pays for special studies that are required for projects, or that Council might request from time to time.

Comprehensive Plan Update \$20,000.00 The City will need to update its Comprehensive Plan per State regulations. A portion of this amount will be spread out over several years. The amount requested is a general estimate from the planning consultant; and is based on what was spent in the past. This update will include analyzing the most current census results.

Mr. Bird stated that he has been talking to the State liaison regarding what will be required in this update cycle. The last cycle was not a full update, which may also be the case this year. The \$20,000.00 is an upper end estimate if we need to do a full review.

Council President Barthel asked for confirmation that the \$20,000.00 was an upper level estimate and that if that amount is needed it would be spread over at least two years.

Mr. Bird said that was the case, and stated that once the Planning Commission has the proposal from the Planning Consultant and coordinates with the State as to what will be required; the actual dollar amount and timeline will be refined.

Council President Barthel asked about alternate sources of funds, noting that the Comprehensive Plan was updated in the past with the the State paying a percentage of the cost.

Mr. Bird stated that the Comprehensive Plan was approximately \$35,000.00 with the State paying \$35,000.00. The Planning Commission is talking to the State to see if there is any funding available at this time. They are also going to meet with WILMAPCO to see if there is a portion of the plan study that can be either done by WILMAPCO, or if they have funds available.

Another option is to see if we can piggyback with another community who is also updating their Comprehensive Plan and do a shared Planning Study. We may be able to share the cost of the census analysis, or a survey data report.

Another opportunity is with the National Monument; with the National Monument opening here there will be studies that they have to do regarding parking and traffic circulation. The Planning Commission will approach them to see if there are any studies they are doing that we can use in the update.

These are all possibilities we want to look into, but the budget we are presenting at this time is based on the information we have now. As these issues are refined the actual dollar amount as far as the city's obligation is concerned could go down.

Council President Barthel asked if there would be any update to the totals before the Budget process is finished

Mr. Bird said they will certainly try to get any information back to Council as soon as possible.

Historic Area Commission

Historic Area Commission is requesting the same amount as last year; \$3,180.00.

New Castle Senior Center

Mark Zitz, Senior Center Treasurer spoke on behalf of the New Castle Senior Center. Mr. Zitz thanked Council for their gift last year, he stated that it made a great difference in the Centers ability to provide excellent services for our seniors

The Center continues to be an important part of the community, membership increased approximately 15% and the demand for programs continues to be very high. The Center continues to find ways to raise money, and partner with other organizations. The City's contribution helps to close budget gap so the Center can do what we do well. Mr. Zitz asked for questions from Council.

Councilperson Cochran noted that the Senior Center received funding from the City, the Trustees and the State; Mr. Cochran asked if the Center received any finds from the County. Mr. Zitz stated that they do not. Council Person Cochran noted that according to the Senior Center request 1/3 of the members live in the City Limits, and he feels if 2/3 are from the County, the County should also be offering funding for the Center. The Senior Center will look into securing funds from the County either this year, or in the future if the date has passed for requests for this year.

Tree Commission

Tree Commission is requesting funds of \$39,800.00 to take care of the trees in New Castle. The Commission has approximately 1,500 trees to deal with. The past two years the Commission has not been able to do the work they felt needed to be done.

President Barthel inquired what Education, Memberships and literature included. Mr. Lloyd stated that memberships include the International Society of Horticulture and Urban Horticulture Society. Literature is educational materials mainly published by International Society of Horticulture, including information about Standards, Tree Identification and Identification of common problems. There are many educational opportunities available if the Commission is interested.

President Barthel asked Mr. Lloyd to further break down each of the categories and present these at a future Budget Workshop.

Councilperson Petty asked if there had been any emergency situations this year. Mr. Lloyd stated that even with the storm, there had been only one emergency of a tree failing.

President Barthel asked if there was a way to put emergency funds into the budget based on previous experience. Mr. Lloyd said he would like to have emergency funds in each category.

Mr. Lloyd said that he would further breakdown the request and present at a future meeting.

Flower Beautification Committee

The Beautification Committee had not submitted a letter requesting a specific amount for this year; President Barthel concluded that unless we hear differently from that committee that they are requesting the same \$2,500.00 as last year.

Recreation Program

Ms. Delaney reported on behalf of the Recreation Program, stating that they would present at the June 29 meeting.

They will start interviewing after Memorial Day for the summer intern position. The Program will run for six weeks starting the Monday after July 4th.

President Barthel summarized the meeting stating that, more information is coming from the Planning Commission and the Tree Commission. The Mayor is going to look into County funds for the Senior Center.

Ms. Delaney reported that the Beautification Committee had not yet requested their budgeted amount of \$2,500.00 from last year. And there was one tree damaged during the storm, and that cost was \$850.00.

President Barthel asked if the City typically pays the Beautification out this late in the year. Ms. Delaney stated that they will usually send a letter and based on that letter the City will release the funds.

It was noted that there have been plantings going on around town, and the Committee may still be holding the invoice.

Meeting was adjourned: 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly Burgmuller